Claims 1-38 (Cancelled)

39. (Original) A system for harvesting a length of autologous vessel from a patient, comprising:

an elongated element having an interior dimensioned to be advanced over a length of autologous vessel; and

a cutting element disposed at a distal end of said elongated element, said cutting element configured to extricate the exterior of said length of autologous vessel from surrounding tissue such that said extricated autologous vessel may thereafter be cut and removed from said patient.

40. (Original) The system of claim 39 and further, including an introducer dimensioned to be passed into said length of autologous vessel, wherein said elongated element is dimensioned to be advanced over said introducer to extricate the exterior of said length of autologous vessel from surrounding tissue.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40 and further, including a dilator dimensioned to be positioned within said introducer to dilate an opening formed in said autologous vessel and thereby facilitate passage of said introducer into said autologous vessel.

42. (Original) The system of claim 41 and further, including a guide-wire dimensioned to be passed through said dilator to facilitate advancement of at least one of said introducer and said dilator into said autologous vessel.

43. (Original) The system of claim 39 and further, wherein said extricated autologous vessel may be cut and removed from said patient via at least a mechanical cutting system and an electronic cutting system.

44. (Original) The system of claim 43 and further, wherein said mechanical cutting system comprises at least one of a second cutting system on said elongated element,

surgical scissors, and an anvil-type cutting system comprising an anvil member capable of being introduced into said autologous vessel and advanced into abutting relation with said cutting element to sever a distal end of said autologous vessel.

45. (Original) The system of claim 44 and further, wherein said second cutting system comprises at least one cutting element hingedly coupled to said elongated element and configured to cut a distal end of said autologous vessel.

46. (Original) The system of claim 39 and further, comprising:

a system for holding said autologous vessel at least one of before, during and after said autologous vessel is extricated from said surrounding tissue, said holding system having an elongated element having a balloon capable of being selectively inflated and deflated, said balloon including a plurality of coupling members extending therefrom, wherein said balloon upon inflation will cause said coupling members to extend at least one of into and through said autologous tissue.

47. (Original) The system of claim 46 and further, wherein said holding system includes a sheath capable of protecting said interior of said autologous vessel from said coupling members on said balloon during advancement of said balloon into said autologous vessel.

48. (Original) The system of claim 39 and further, wherein said elongated element is generally cylindrical having at least one of a uniform diameter and a stepped diameter having a first diameter, a second diameter larger that said first diameter, and a tapered region extending between said first and second diameter.

49. (Original) The system of claim 48 and further, wherein said cutting element extends generally longitudinally away from said first diameter of said elongated element.

50. (Original) A method for harvesting a length of autologous vessel from a patient, comprising:

providing an elongated element having an interior dimensioned to be advanced over a length of autologous vessel, and a cutting element disposed at a distal end of said elongated element;

advancing said elongated element over a length of autologous vessel such that said cutting element extricates the exterior of said length of autologous vessel from surrounding tissue; and

removing said extricated autologous vessel from said patient.

51. (Original) The method of claim 50 and further, including providing an introducer dimensioned to be passed into said length of autologous vessel, wherein said elongated element is dimensioned to be advanced over said introducer to extricate the exterior of said length of autologous vessel from surrounding tissue.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51 and further, including providing a dilator dimensioned to be positioned within said introducer to dilate an opening formed in said autologous vessel and thereby facilitate passage of said introducer into said autologous vessel.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52 and further, including providing a guide-wire dimensioned to be passed through said dilator to facilitate advancement of at least one of said introducer and said dilator into said autologous vessel.

54. (Original) The method of claim 50 and further, wherein said step of removing may be accomplished by cutting said autologous vessel via at least a mechanical cutting system and an electronic cutting system.

55. (Original) The method of claim 54 and further, wherein said mechanical cutting system comprises at least one of a second cutting system on said elongated element, surgical scissors, and an anvil-type cutting system comprising an anvil member capable of being introduced into said autologous vessel and advanced into abutting relation with said cutting element to sever a distal end of said autologous vessel.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55 and further, wherein said second cutting system comprises at least one cutting element hingedly coupled to said elongated element and configured to cut a distal end of said autologous vessel.

57. (Original) The method of claim 50 and further, comprising the step of:

providing a system for holding said autologous vessel at least one of before, during and after said autologous vessel is extricated from said surrounding tissue, said holding system having an elongated element having a balloon capable of being selectively inflated and deflated, said balloon including a plurality of coupling members extending therefrom; and

inflating said balloon to cause said coupling members to extend at least one of into and through said autologous tissue.

58. (Original) The method of claim 57 and further, wherein said step of providing said holding system includes providing a sheath capable of protecting said interior of said autologous vessel from said coupling members on said balloon during advancement of said balloon into said autologous vessel.

59. (Original) The method of claim 50 and further, wherein said elongated element is generally cylindrical having at least one of a uniform diameter and a stepped diameter having a first diameter, a second diameter larger that said first diameter, and a tapered region extending between said first and second diameter.

60. (Original) The method of claim 59 and further, wherein said cutting element extends generally longitudinally away from said first diameter of said elongated element.

Claims 61 – 78 (Cancelled)

Applicant has, through this Preliminary Amendment, cancelled from prosecution (without prejudice) claims 1-38 and 61-78. Claims 39-60 are currently pending. In the event that there are any questions concerning this submission or the application in general, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so that prosecution may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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